

## COMMENTARY

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AIRLIFT  
Dispatch

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## SOLL II mission is coming back to Charleston

By Col Rusty Findley  
437 AW commander

The Combined Federal Campaign has been extended another 10 days and will close out on Monday. We extended the campaign to ensure everyone was contacted and given the opportunity to contribute. We are very close to achieving our goal and the extra week will hopefully put us over the top. Charleston has traditionally been one of the largest contributors to this worthwhile campaign. Thank you for making a difference!

The Armed Forces Basketball championship games began Wednesday. On Friday, the Air Force team will play Navy at noon and the U.S. Marines at 8 p.m. on the Starlifter basketball court in the base Sports and Fitness Center. Please come out to the games to cheer our Air Force team to victory. All events are open to the base populace.

The closing ceremonies will be held immediately following the last game today. If you want more information, call 963-4321. I hope to see you there.

I met with a broad cross section of company grade officers attending the CGO orientation course on Monday. This training will broaden their horizons and expose them to many different areas on the base. The exposure to the many different functional areas should make them all better at what they do for this wing and our U.S. Air Force.

On Wednesday and Thursday, **Brig. Gen. Jerry Black**, 315<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing commander, and I took 39 civic leaders to visit Keesler Air Force Base, Miss. and Patrick AFB, Fla. The trip was a great success and a superb opportunity to highlight our people and Air Force to the local community. Special thanks to our mission commander, **Maj. Steve Shope**, 14<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron, and **1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Beth Szucs**, 437 AW Public Affairs, for organizing the trip.

We will say farewell to **Chief Master Sgt. John Solomon**, 437<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineer Squadron chief enlisted manager, on the occasion of his retirement Tuesday at 1 p.m. in the Charleston Club. We're going to miss his expertise and guidance. As the base's most senior chief, he served his country for more than 30 years with distinction. He and his spouse, Linda, will remain in the local area. We will hold a luncheon in their honor on Tuesday at 11 a.m. in the Charleston Club. If you interested in attending the retirement luncheon and/or ceremony, please RSVP at 963-4955.

You may have read an article in the paper a few weeks ago about our new 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing career assistance advisor, **Master Sgt. Matt Harless**. He's there to assist commanders, first sergeants and Charleston personnel with information to help our people make informed career decisions. He will play an active role in airmen retention and recruiting and is always ready to address your concerns or questions about entitlements, benefits and career issues. Call him for an appointment at 963-8004. His office is located in room 131 of the base education office.

Team Charleston rose to the occasion last week when **Admiral James O. Ellis**, Commander in Chief of U.S. Naval Forces, Europe and CINC, Allied Forces, Southern Europe, and a party of nine arrived here at 9:40 p.m. after jumping on-board one of our C-17s at Lajes Field, Azores, Portugal, after their aircraft had mechanical problems. We had great support from our drivers in the 437<sup>th</sup> Transportation Squadron and the 437<sup>th</sup> Aerial Port Squadron in loading their baggage. We also had outstanding assistance from the airport

police in helping us get this group on their way. We seamlessly ensured they were quickly transferred to their rental cars so they could travel to Columbia to catch an out-going flight. It took a great deal of teamwork from **Kathy Knichel**, and **1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Chris Hobbs** of our Protocol staff, and Team Charleston to make this happen so smoothly. Thanks to everyone who played a part!

**Lt. Col. John Zazworsky** will assume command of the 15<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron on Tuesday from **Lt. Col. Bill Erikson**. Bill and Melissa Erikson have done a great job leading the 15<sup>th</sup> and I'm looking forward to them moving up to become our new director of wing staff. I know John and Monica will do a similar outstanding job following in the footsteps of Bill and Melissa.

We are making good progress towards bringing the Special Operations Low Level II mission back to Charleston Air Force Base. The SOLL II mission returns to Charleston, having left in April 1999 when our specially configured C-141s were transferred to McGuire AFB, N.J.

The C-17 SOLL II mission responds to direct taskings from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to bring in Special Forces and their equipment on a moment's notice, anywhere around the world. Our aircraft will begin assuming some limited alerts beginning in January. This is a big responsibility for the wing to assume and one that requires everyone's support.

With a newer airframe, we expect greatly increased capabilities from our C-17s and people. **Col. Karl Young**, 437 AW vice commander, will observe our folks practicing this mission in a multi-lateral exercise this weekend in Savannah, Ga. We're in good shape to assume this critical mission.

We hosted a school board meeting Tuesday with guest speaker Dr. Owen Bush, Charleston County District 4 Superintendent. The base school board meets the second Tuesday of every month. We've appointed representatives from the local schools that our children attend, both private and public. The purpose of these meetings is to address issues affecting our children, from transition assistance for new students to changes in the curriculum.

The meeting went well and a special thanks to **Lt. Col. Connie Davis** and **Senior Master Sgt. Terrie Powell** from the 437<sup>th</sup> Support Group for their efforts in arranging these meetings. For more information, call 963-2200.

I am proud to announce that we will represent 21<sup>st</sup> Air Force in the competition within Air Mobility Command for the 2001 Commander-in-Chief Installation Excellence Award. This is the second year in a row that Team Charleston has won 21<sup>st</sup> Air Force honors. This recognition proves once again that we are the premier airlift wing on the face of the planet!

Let me end this column with one of my greatest pleasures i.e. announcing our folks who were recently selected for promotion to chief master sergeant on Wednesday. Promotion to chief is really tough to make, but Team Charleston received more than our fair share on the latest round.

Each selectee can be justifiably proud of their accomplishment. Selected for chief master sergeant were: **Senior Master Sergeants Carl Hunsinger**, 437<sup>th</sup> Transportation Squadron; **James "Moody Blue" Moody**, 14<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron; **Terrie Powell**; **Carl Austin**, 437<sup>th</sup> Logistics Support Squadron; **Thomas Hare**, 1<sup>st</sup> Combat Camera Squadron; and **Jeffrey Kallas**, Air Force Combat Climatology Center.

I am really proud to be associated with such professionals. Congratulations on your achievements!

## Action Line

The Commander's Action line is your direct link to me. It's your opportunity to make Charleston Air Force Base a better place to live, work and play.

First give the appropriate base agency a chance to solve the problem, but if you don't get a satisfactory answer, call me at **963-5581** or send an e-mail to [action@charleston.af.mil](mailto:action@charleston.af.mil)

To ensure you receive a response to your concerns, please leave your name and the information needed to contact you.

